

## **Hosting Task Order Questions**

1. Is EPA anticipating the release of a revised Draft TORFQ which includes the Shared Services sub-tasks?

**This will be included in the final version of the TORFQ.**

2. Currently Shared Services administrative boundaries stop at HQ, in section 3.1 the document indicates "agency-wide Shared Services"; is Shared Services now going beyond HQ?

**The scope of the shared services work will be defined when the final TORFQ is released.**

3. What is the NCC infrastructure in Potomac Yard Data Centers?

**Currently no NCC infrastructure is located at Potomac Yard however we anticipate the implementation of servers, storage, and backup systems supporting CRSSM.**

4. Operator Support is not specified in this task order, will it be performed in another task order?

**A revised TORFQ will remove the following functions from the Enterprise Server TO and be included within the Hosting TO. Even though these functions are specific to the Enterprise Server, they shall be performed by the operations support staff within the Hosting Task Order. These functions will include:**

- a) **facilitate the delivery of printout to customers, tape billing and handling, and media maintenance.**
- b) **operate printers and distribute their output;**
- c) **provide operational support for the Enterprise Server as well as peripheral devices, 24x7x365 days of the year; provide Input/Output support and tape maintenance for the Enterprise Server;**

5. Does the “continuous support” referenced in the first paragraph of section 3.7 imply 24x365?

**No. The TO’s Performance Work Statement will be revised to clarify requirement. This will be included in the final version released with the TORFQ.**

6. Section 3.4.3.1.2 MONITORING, WORKLOAD CAPTURE, AND REPORTING Item 9 for what level of data does EPA require for the “operational environments”? Is this OS only?

**Operating system and server resources.**

7. Section 3.6 Disaster Recovery how do the DR activities listed in the TOR tie in with DR in the other task orders?

**When the final version of the TORFQ is released, the Performance Work Statement will add the following to the Enterprise Server TO:**

**The contractor shall participate in the planning, testing, coordinating, and execution of EPA's Disaster Recovery program administered under the Hosting Task Order. This includes periodic meetings, annual 72 hour testing at the remote facility (travel to be reimbursed), and any actual disaster event (to be reimbursed accordingly).**

8. Section 3.6 Disaster Recovery, EPA describes Enterprise Server disaster recovery as "conduct ". Does this refer to coordination and project management or performance of the actual tasks?

**"Conduct" refers to performance of the actual tasks. It includes any and all activities that may be required to execute the Disaster Recovery program. The Hosting TO is specific to the non-Enterprise Server platform.**

9. In section 3.4.3.1.5, EPA speaks to data encryption, to what degree are data encryptions required? How much data and to what level of encryption (on storage, in memory, etc)? Also who will classify the data as sensitive?

**EPA has requirements for the encryption of data in transit and at rest, as determined by EPA application owners. EPA is in the process of migrating applications which require encryption to FIPS compliance.**

10. Section 3.9.2 Can EPA please provide the number of supported systems requiring contingency planning?

**The contingency plan generally addresses the requirements of all hosted systems. However, only systems subscribing to a disaster recovery service or future failover service require additional resources.**

11. As Application management will be performing updates to application layer software will the Application Management staff have admin level access to the server?

**The intent is to permit the minimum access required to perform application activities while maintaining server configuration integrity. EPA will be relying on the vendor to provide advice, best practices, and/or control mechanisms.**

12. Within the coordination and tracking of responses to CSIRC in the hosting requirements, is this for operating system only? Does it include application layers that modify the O/S libraries?

**It does include the operating system libraries and will occasionally require coordination with application management staff.**

13. Can EPA please clarify hours of workday? Are they from 8am EST to 5pm PST?

**The general workday is 8am EST to 5pm EST. However, hours may be adjusted for specific projects.**

14. Ref section 3.10, Assumptions. Please clarify the policies, procedures, directives, and standards the contractors are to comply with?

**Full EPA documentation will be provided to the successful vendor.**

Ref section 3.12. Please clarify what you mean by participate in contract-wide ITIL processes. Does this mean to be part of a board that helps to define and develop the processes?

**EPA will define processes applicable to all task orders. This information will be included in the final TORFQ when the entire document is released.**

15. Section 3.4.1 Overview of National Hosting Sub-task, paragraph 1 states, in part: “The National Hosting sub-task supports the midrange hosting environment in the National Computer Center (NCC). This includes ongoing operational support for UNIX, Linux and Windows servers and operating systems, storage and backup systems, the various utilities associated with server security and management, and the NCC computer room support.”

For clarity, please provide a list of “the various utilities associated with server security and management” as referenced in the Overview.

**This will be included in the final version of the TORFQ.**

16. Section 3.4.1 Overview of National Hosting Sub-task provides the “NCC server and storage environment....composition.” Following the list, EPA states: “This list is not intended to be all-inclusive and is subject to change.”

Will a complete inventory list, accurate to the best of EPA knowledge, be provided with the final task order RFP?

Please also include the list of equipment managed at alternative sites.

**This will be included in the final version of the TORFQ.**

17. Section 3.4.2 Objective, paragraph 1, reads in part: “Support for alternate locations includes, but is not limited to, NCC infrastructure located in Potomac Yard and other Headquarters computer rooms, regional offices, and IBM’s Boulder Colorado Recovery Site.”

Can EPA provide the total number and list of locations anticipated to require support by the contractor upon contract award?

**In addition to the NCC, it is anticipated that remote hosting operations will minimally include Potomac Yard (DC) , Region 5 (Chicago), and Region 8 (Denver) facilities.**

If managed remotely, is the vendor required to be onsite to accompany vendors to fix equipment? If so, what SLAs define how quickly the vendor must be onsite when required?

**EPA will arrange for local staff to provide on-site assistance at remote as required, including troubleshooting and vendor escorting. Typically a 4 hour response time will be required for vendor support.**

18. Section 3.4.2 Objective, paragraph 2 reads in part: “NCC must be able to accurately track and report the workload consumed by each customer in support of Working Capital Fund (WCF) cost recovery processes and schedule.”

Can the government supply a representative report of the workload consumed for each customer in support of the WCF?

**See Attachment for WCF Usage Submission Fixed Width File Format**

19. Section 3.4.2 Objective reads in part: “An inventory of all systems operated under the task order shall be maintained and include an accurate accounting of each systems compliance status with regard to operating, configuration and security requirements.”

Is this inventory currently available to be provided to bidders or the awarded contractor?

**Yes. This will be included in the final version of the TORFQ.**

20. Section 3.4.2 Objective reads in part: “Many customers also desire the ability to perform selected functions themselves, according to their schedules and NCC must offer a solution which supports that requirement while maintaining the security and integrity of the environment.”

Can EPA provided details about the “selected functions” that are desired by customers? Can EPA further provide details regarding any self-service solutions/actions in place today at the NCC?

**A limited number of customers are currently provided with administrative rights to dedicated servers, and that is normally permitted for a specific event (i.e., a scheduled COTS upgrade). However, it is anticipated that a growing number of customers will need the ability to install, configure, and upgrade COTS software.**

21. Section 3.4.3.1.1 Operations, item 4, reads: “Improve the efficiency of, and minimize the resources required for ongoing operations of the NCC computing environments, including the provision of system management tools and utilities.”

What tools does EPA currently use? By the use of the word “provision,” does EPA expect the vendor to supply non-GFE tools for systems management?

**EPA expects the vendor to maximize the efficiency of NCC operations. The vendor shall provide all required tools needed to achieve that level of efficiency.**

22. Section 3.4.3.1.2 Monitoring, Workload Capture and Reporting, item 1, reads “Provide monthly status reports containing information on average response times, processor utilization, memory usage, and summaries of problems.”

What monitoring tools does EPA currently use for gathering the reporting information?

**Nagios**

23. Section 3.4.3.1.6 Backup and Failover, item 5, reads “Manage the backup and restore systems, ensuring that data can be retrieved consistent with EPA retention policies.”

Can EPA provide the retention policies?

**Full documentation will be provided upon award. In summary:**

- a. Performs daily incremental backups of disk files that have been created or changed since the previous backup and retains daily incremental backup tapes for forty-five days.**
- b. Performs full disk backups weekly and retains them for three months.**
- c. Performs full disk backups biannually for disaster precautions and stores the tapes offsite.**

24. Please clarify in section 3.4.3.1.6 what method of remote replication is required. Does this entail copies of the tapes to be physically sent or is replication performed over the network? Also, does the term “manage the transfer of critical tapes” mean: (1) the vendor should price the transport into their solution and (2) this is the replication to the BCRS center referenced in the prior sentence?

**Approximately 250 tapes (Cartridges) are stored at the EPA facility. About 50 tapes are rotated every other week. Once a month, an additional 50 tapes are rotated. Transportation and storage bins for the tapes are provided by the warehouse provider.**

25. Can EPA please provide the current number and types of tapes that will be stored in the off-site facility? Is open or closed tape storage required?

**Please see the answer provided in question 24.**

26. Section 3.5 NCC Facilities, reads “The contract shall perform asset management...”

Can EPA describe the procedures and tools used for this? Is the current data accurate, complete and up-to-date?

**A wall-to-wall inventory is performed annually and is maintained in a format that can be converted into Microsoft ACCESS database system. The contractor is expect to participate in the shipping, receiving, and excessing of property as well as maintain an electronic and paper trail of property distribution and cross check assets with the FASD property system.**

27. Section 3.6 Disaster Recovery, reads in part: “The contract shall procure services from a remote data warehouse facility...”.

Does EPA wish to have the vendor provide this as a managed service?

How many tapes will be stored at the facility?

How many tapes will be transported each way bi-weekly?

What requirements does EPA have for the transport?

**This should be included in any proposed ODC for this TO.**

**Approximately 250 tapes are stored at the facility. About 50 tapes are rotated every other week. Once a month, an additional 50 tapes are rotated. Transportation of the tapes is provided by the warehouse provider.**

28. Section 3.8 High Performance Computing Systems Operations Monitoring, Section II. Scope of Requirements, item d)

Will the successful vendor incur the cost of maintenance?

**Maintenance for HPC tape storage system hardware components may be separately priced and invoiced as an ODC item under the Task Order. On receiving Technical Direction, the successful vendor (the Task Order awardee) will work with the TOCOR to prepare the list of items to be maintained, obtain quotes from approved maintenance provider(s), and submit an ODC proposal to the EPA. On receiving ODC approval from the EPA, the Task Order awardee shall acquire the relevant maintenance coverage and manage the maintenance agreement for its duration. Typically, maintenance agreements will be required for one year duration, beginning and ending at the start and end of a fiscal year respectively. Since the tape storage systems used for HPC and non-HPC at the NCC are similar and from the same OEM, there may be efficiencies and cost benefits to be gained by consolidating HPC and non-HPC tape storage hardware maintenance requirements into a single maintenance agreement.**

29. Section 3.8 High Performance Computing Systems Operations Monitoring, Section III. Task and Deliverables, item a)

This section states Project Management Plan will be provided with the response to this TORFQ but this conflicts with the Schedule of Deliverables in sections “IV” and 3.4.4. Could the Government please clarify when the PMP should be delivered?

**Since the entire TORFQ has not been published, only the Performance Work Statement, this information was not available to be reviewed. This information will be included when the final version of the TORFQ is released.**

30. Section 3.8 High Performance Computing Systems Operations Monitoring, Section II. Scope of Requirements, item f)

Can EPA provide details about the physical security to be provided?

**The HPC systems will be co-located with non-HPC systems in EPA's National Computing Center (NCC) on the main EPA campus and at the remote NCC site in EPA's Reproductive Toxicology Facility (RTF), about a mile away from the main campus. There are no separate or unique physical security requirements for HPC systems.**

31. Section 3.8 High Performance Computing Systems Operations Monitoring, Section II. Scope of Requirements, item h)

Will EPA provide UPSes as GFE?

**Yes.**

32. Section 3.8 High Performance Computing Systems Operations Monitoring, Section III Tasks and Deliverables, item a).

Is the Project Management Plan required as part of the technical proposal submitted in response to this TORFQ?

**See response to question # 29.**

33. Can EPA provide more detail around their comment concerning the statement about the NCC's investment in ScienceLogic? Can you specifically share what this platform will provide and how EPA plans to incorporate it into NCC operations?

**EPA has acquired ScienceLogic EM7 to monitor and report on the operational status of a wide range of devices within EPA's national infrastructure, including devices not owned and managed by OTOP. The objective is to improve EPA IT managers' "operational awareness" of all critical facets of the infrastructure through a unified "dashboard" capability, fed by a unified monitoring capability. To the extent possible and prudent, which has yet to be determined, EM7 will be used for this purpose in lieu of other monitoring and reporting tools. EM7 data, displayed in audience-appropriate formats, will be made available to various levels of OTOP management; OTOP personnel responsible for infrastructure planning, service level monitoring, customer relationship management, and contract administration; OTOP federal and contractor personnel who manage individual technologies at the technical level, and, ultimately, OTOP customer organizations. Technical operations teams for all technologies shall be expected to: learn and understand the capabilities of EM7; understand the capabilities and requirements of their managed devices with respect to EM7 monitoring (for example, what operational status information can be provided via SNMP, and what that entails); coordinate with EM7 administrators to determine the best dashboard views, event thresholds, and alerting and ticketing protocols for their respective sets of devices; and routinely use EM7 data to**

**gain insight into operational status. Whether EM7 administration will be performed under ITS-EPA II or another contractual vehicle has yet to be determined.**

34. EPA did not indicate whether EPA anticipates contractor staff supporting each of the Sub-Tasks identified in the Draft PWS to be located on government site or on contractor site. What is the required on-site service response time? Contractor recommends that if EPA requires less than 60 minutes response time, EPA may wish to consider EPA-site accommodations for contractor staff.

**On-site accommodations will only be provided for staff supporting sub-task 3.5 NCC Facilities. The NCC on-site response time requirement is two (2) hours.**

35. Coop/DR Section 3.4.3.1.6 Backup and Failover - What are the expected Backup plans and standards for recovery in regard to Recovery Point Objective and Recovery Time Objectives?

**Recovery Point Objective is 24 hours and Recovery Time Objective is 8 hours.**

36. Task Locations Section 3.1 Background - Could EPA please list the locations referenced by the statement "the Task Order will remotely operate and maintain servers and storage systems located at additional sites, including EPA regional office computer rooms"?

**Additional sites include, but are not limited to, Research Triangle Park, NC; Potomac Yard, DC; Region 5 Chicago, IL; Region 8 Denver, CO.**

37. Task Staffing Section 3.1 Background -Are the remote locations referenced intended to be staffed by on-site personnel under the Task Order or dispatch of personnel from NCC, in order that the Physical (hardware) requirements of the TO are supported?

**Systems at alternate locations will be administered remotely under normal circumstances. MOUs will be established with IT organizations at the remote locations to provide limited on-site assistance when required. TO staff may be occasionally dispatched to implement more extensive repairs or upgrades.**

38. Tape Support Section 3.4.3.1.6 Backup and Failover - Could a number be provided for current and projected off-board volumes (Tape) supporting Tape Library, Catalog control, and off-site rotation?

**Off-site rotation: Approximately 250 tapes (Cartridges) are stored at the facility. About 50 tapes are rotated every other week. Once a month, an additional 50 tapes are rotated. Transportation and storage bins for the tapes are provided by the warehouse provider.**

	<b>NCC Silo</b>	<b>RTF Silo</b>	<b>Non Silo</b>
<b>Mainframe</b>	<b>8763</b>	<b>9874</b>	<b>24113</b>
<b>UNIX</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5062</b>	<b>15</b>



39. General Section 3.1 Background – What tools and utilities are included to implement the EPA standard systems?

**Some information in this regard is found in the BPA Clause 15.52-211-79. Information not contained on this website will be provided to the successful vendor.**

40. General Section 3.1 Background - What tools has EPA adopted to support their IT process management?

**BMC Remedy is used for change and incident management.**

41. General Support (no specific reference section) - What is the incident volume and distribution by hour and day (for incidents that would be in scope of this TO for resolution)?

**That information is not currently available.**

42. Service Requests Section 3.4 National Hosting - Are requests for electrical connectivity, network connectivity, and firewall exceptions all handled through a common Incident Management system that can be used to track the status of service requests?

**No, different processes are required to request each of the three services.**

43. Service Request Section 3.4 National Hosting - Is the same Incident Management system used to track all National Hosting service requests?

**Yes.**

44. Service Demands Section 3.4 National Hosting - Does the consumption of services between subtasks present a possible organizational conflict of interest that would prevent (vendor) from bidding on subsequent subtasks?

**The Conflict of Interest provisions are included in each vendor's BPA. If a vendor feels that they would have an organizational conflict of interest by performing work on this Task Order, or any other Task Order, this must be identified in their Task Order response along with their proposed plan to avoid, mitigate or neutralize the OCOI. If the Government identifies any specific COI with the performance of any Task Order this will be identified in the Task Order RFQ.**

45. Tools Section 3.4 National Hosting - The RFQ states: "The NCC must leverage automation tools which reduce operational costs for both physical and virtual servers and storage. The tools shall be proposed and functionality documented, along with a practical return on investment." Is this being requested as part of the proposal or as part of operations after the award?

**Tools shall be provided as part of the proposal.**

46. Tools Section 3.4 National Hosting - Please provide a list of the current support tools in place.

**This will be included in the final version of the TORFQ.**

47. Emerging Technologies 3.4.3.1.7 Technology Planning - Does the EPA have a formal process for Technology vetting to take place?

**The vetting process is dependent upon the scope and magnitude of the technology under consideration.**

48. Facilities 3.5 NCC Facilities - What is the BTU rating for the NCC?

**EPA will be responsible for providing the required power.**

49. Facilities 3.5 NCC Facilities - What is the current electrical draw for the NCC both actual and plate ratings?

**EPA will be responsible for providing the required power.**

50. Facilities 3.5 NCC Facilities - What environmental monitoring controls and tools are in place today?

**BAS environmental monitoring system is maintained by EPA. Only the monitoring of the system is required although help calls may be initiated by the contractor.**

51. Facilities 3.5 NCC Facilities - Please provide the electrical MVA limits to all facilities within scope of this TO.

**EPA will be responsible for providing the required power.**

52. Facilities 3.5 NCC Facilities - Please provide the fire suppression system that is in place for all facilities within scope of this TO?

**The contractor will not be required to maintain the fire suppression system. There is a wet pipe system within the facility. There is a FM200 system for tape silos.**

53. Communications 3.4.3.1.3 Communication and Coordination #11 - Will the conferences be held in RTP? If not, what is the expected location, number of conferences and number of attendees?

**Vendors should plan to participate in two or more conferences per year.**

54. Under section 3.2, page 2, will the subtasks for shared services be defined at a later time versus being included in the initial TORFQ/PWS?

**This will be included in the final version of the TORFQ.**

55. Under section 3.4 National Hosting, 3.4.2, 1st paragraph on page 3, does the EPA have a requirement for the permanent placement of support staff at the listed “alternate locations?”

**Systems at alternate locations will be administered remotely under normal circumstances. MOUs will be established with IT organizations at the remote locations to provide limited on-site assistance when required. TO staff may be occasionally dispatched to implement more extensive repairs or upgrades.**

56. Under section 3.4.3.1 Administer and Operate Server and Storage Systems on page 5, is there a list of the sites and hardware platforms located at designated remote locations for which the activities listed in Sections 3.4.3.1.1 through 3.4.3.1.7 will apply?

**This will be included in the final version of the TORFQ.**

57. Under section 3.4.3.1.1 Operations, on page 5, will the EPA provide a list of the toolsets that are standard and currently being used in the NCC hosting environment?

**This will be included in the final version of the TORFQ.**

58. Under Section 3.4.3.1.2 Monitoring, Workload Capture and Reporting on page 5, will the EPA be providing a budgetary number for ODC purchases of hardware and software for bidding evaluation purposes?

**This will be included in the final version of the TORFQ.**

59. Under section 3.5 NCC Facilities, Performance Measures on page 11, are there existing drawings for equipment and lists of hardware that will be provided to the successful Vendor?

**Yes.**

**ATTACHMENT – QUESTION NO. 18**

**Usage Submission Fixed Width File Format**  
**The following file format applies to all service codes.**

Usage input files are composed of both header and detail records. Header records include the service code and summarize the detail records that follow. A separate header record will need to be created for each service for which usage will be submitted.

<b>Header Record Requirement</b>					
<b>Field</b>	<b>Field Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Width</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
1	Record Type	Character	1	H	The record type for header records is H. Header records summarize the detail lines that follow.
2	Service Code	Character	2	AD	Service Code that pertains to the detail records that follow
3	Number of Records	Numeric	7	0000520	Number of detail records that follow this header record.
4	Usage	Numeric	20	24532.000	Total Usage for this service code.
Total			30		

Detail records provide the details of the usage that is summarized in the header record and should be provided in the following format (all fields are required unless stated otherwise). Because eBusiness will contain a centralized registration of services, many of the product attributes historically submitted with workload (user, phone number, account, organizational information, etc.) will no longer be required. The registration ID referenced in the attached document will serve as a key to link to this data in eBusiness.

<b>Detail Record Requirement</b>					
<b>Field</b>	<b>Field Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Width</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
1	Record Type	Character	1	D	The record type for detail records is D. The detail record type represents individual usage records.
2	RegistrationID	Character	30	RDP406BX	Registration ID
3	Usage	Numeric	20	1234.000	Usage amount in units.
4	Stdtd	Date	8	20061001	Start Date of Monthly Submission in YYYYMMDD format.
5	Enddt	Date	8	20061031	End date of monthly submission in YYYYMMDD format.
6	Date	Date	8	20061105	Date (optional) in YYYYMMDD format. Historically provided for Teleconferencing services
7	Time	Time	6	131500	Time (optional) in HHMMSS military time format. Historically provided for Teleconferencing services
8	Phmins	Numeric	20	12345.000	Phone Minutes Used (optional) Historically provided for Voice services
9	Phcalls	Numeric	20	312	Phone Calls (optional) Historically provided for Voice services
10	Category	Character	10	FEE	Category code (mandatory/optional dependant per product).
Total			126		

\*This is a fixed width text file format.

\*Not all services will have the Date, Time, Phone Minutes Used, Phone Calls, or Category fields. For services where these fields are not applicable the information should be left blank.

\*Negative amounts such as credited usage should be submitted with a negative sign (-) before the usage. For example, -1234.000 would credit usage for 1234.000 units.

The Start Date and End Date of usage detail records should not span across months. If your usage submissions do span across months and a registration record is transferred from one customer account to another, the usage will be prorated across the impacted customer accounts.